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Identical letters dated 13 September 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the following:

The Turkish regime has stated that it intends to deliver what it calls humanitarian assistance to the city of Aleppo. The Syrian Arab Republic hereby declares that it rejects the delivery of such assistance by any party, above all the Turkish regime, without coordination with the Syrian Government and the United Nations.

The Syrian Government also stresses that if the Turkish Air Force carries out any military operations above Syrian territory on the pretext of striking Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, and does not coordinate with the Syrian Government and Russian operational command, such actions shall constitute acts of aggression and violations of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Syria will respond to such aggression with the means appropriate for defending its national sovereignty.

Since the start of the crisis in Syria, Turkey has supported armed terrorist groups and provided them with weapons, financing and shelter. It has hosted terrorists on its soil and provided them with all manner of assistance, and has brought terrorists and murderers from all parts of the globe to kill Syrians and destroy Syria.

Therefore, Turkey has no right to claim that it is concerned for the Syrian people and is fighting terrorism, especially in the city of Aleppo, where it has provided unlimited support to the terrorism that has been the cause of the death and destruction visited upon that city.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mounzer **Mounzer**
Minister Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, including the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the statement by the President of the Security Council of 16 December 2014 (S/PRST/2014/27), by means of which the Security Council requested me to submit to it an annual report on ways to strengthen the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, including the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU). Outlined herein are the collaborative efforts of the United Nations and the African Union to address threats to peace and security in Africa, and the key role played by UNOAU, established in 2010, in strengthening relations between the two organizations.

2. The Security Council, the General Assembly and various organs of the African Union have repeatedly called for stronger strategic engagement between the United Nations, the African Union and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. In my report entitled "The future of United Nations peace operations: implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations" (A/70/357-S/2015/682), I noted the significant progress made in institutionalizing United Nations cooperation with regional organizations, including the African Union. I also recognized that the peace and security responsibilities shouldered by the African Union and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms in Africa had increased in recent years. I am committed to strengthening arrangements to facilitate coordinated action and effective delivery by the African Union for our collective benefit.

II. Challenges to peace and security in Africa

3. Since 2001, there has been a reduction in protracted intra-State conflicts on the continent. Collaboration between the United Nations, the African Union, the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms and other partners has contributed to

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efforts to address issues of peace and constitutional order in politically polarized situations, such as in Madagascar and Guinea-Bissau. Countries emerging from crises or violent conflict, such as Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, are developing more inclusive political institutions. Peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts have yielded results in Sierra Leone, paving the way for progress towards sustainable development. In addition, the African Union has adopted a normative framework on unconstitutional changes of government and has suspended the participation at its meetings of Governments established through military coups.

4. Nevertheless, numerous challenges to the prevention, management and resolution of conflict in Africa remain. Transnational networks continue to smuggle weapons, people and illicit drugs across the continent and beyond. Addressing the immediate causes of conflict through preventive diplomacy and mediation will not yield sustainable peace in the absence of long-term sustained measures to tackle structural issues, such as weak governance and political, social and economic marginalization and exclusion. In some instances, the existence of borders which are not fully delineated and demarcated can be sources of conflict, especially when such zones are, or simply are thought to be, rich in resources. Moreover, modern conflicts involve a nebulous array of non-State actors, rapid means of communication, ease of access to weapons and finance, and the spread of violent extremism, which together challenge conventional approaches to conflict management.

5. The spread of violent extremism and terrorism in Africa, and the humanitarian and human rights crises that they provoke, pose a serious threat to the continent. The emergence and spread of such groups as Al-Shabaab in Somalia, Boko Haram in the Lake Chad basin countries, and the Lord's Resistance Army, first in Uganda and later in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, present new threats to peace and security in Africa that require timely and decisive responses from the African Union and the wider international community. In 2007, the African Union deployed the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to restore stability in the country; it also established the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army; and more recently, it has supported the Lake Chad Basin Commission in the establishment of a multinational joint task force to combat Boko Haram. UNOAU has played and continues to play an instrumental role in supporting those and other African Union initiatives to address those threats.

6. Piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Guinea also poses challenges to the maintenance of peace and security. While concerted international efforts with regard to maritime security have significantly degraded the capability of transnational criminal groups to interrupt maritime traffic, take hostages for ransom and loot cargo in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean off the coast of Somalia, incidents of piracy and violent criminal activities in the Gulf of Guinea remain a concern, and the root causes of piracy are yet to be fully addressed.

7. Election-related disputes also continue to pose a threat, potentially reversing gains made towards democratization. The erosion of public confidence in electoral management bodies, delays in holding elections, unconstitutional attempts at extending term limits and sophisticated manipulation of electoral processes create resentment and sow the seeds of discord as well as violence and other forms of human rights violations. Recent developments in Burkina Faso, Burundi and the Congo are illustrations of such threats to peace and security.

III. From growing cooperation to a strategic partnership

8. During the past decade, a number of frameworks and mechanisms have been established to strengthen United Nations-African Union cooperation. In 2006, the Addis Ababa Declaration entitled "Enhancing United Nations-African Union cooperation: framework for the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union" (A/61/630, annex) was issued. Through the programme, the United Nations pledged its support to strengthen the African Union Commission, focusing on conflict prevention, mediation, good offices, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The programme comes to an end in 2016. To build upon the achievements of the programme and taking into account the challenges encountered, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, at its twenty-seventh ordinary session, in June 2015, endorsed a successor programme, the "Framework for a Renewed United Nations-African Union Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda 2017-2027".

9. In 2007, the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union began holding annual joint consultative meetings. In their first joint communiqué (S/2007/421, annex II), the two bodies committed themselves to developing a stronger and more structured relationship and underlined the importance of support for the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture and its pillars. In 2007 also, the General Assembly adopted resolution 61/296, in which it requested the Secretary-General to take appropriate measures to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat to meet the special needs of Africa. The commitment to strengthen cooperation and establish a more effective relationship at the strategic level was repeatedly expressed throughout the rest of the decade in a series of resolutions and statements by the Security Council[1] and the General Assembly.[2]

10. The establishment of UNOAU in 2010 was a significant step forward in advancing that partnership. For the initial three to four years, the Office supported capacity-building of the African Union Commission for the planning and management of peace support operations, having recognized the need to support rapid and coordinated deployment to the Sudan, Somalia and, subsequently, Mali and the Central African Republic. The planning and deployment of African Union peace support operations were typically coordinated with the United Nations through UNOAU; some of those operations later became United Nations peacekeeping operations. UNOAU provided technical support to enhance the capacity of the African Union to deploy election observation missions and promote gender awareness.

11. UNOAU supported the engagement of my special representatives, envoys and mediators with their African Union counterparts, including at African Union summits and meetings of the Peace and Security Council. The Office has worked closely with the African Union High-level Implementation Panel on the Sudan and South Sudan. It has also facilitated coordination between the African Union and my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, as well as my Special Representatives on Sexual Violence in Conflict, on Children and Armed Conflict and for Libya. Over time, further efforts were made to strengthen coordination, including annual "desk-

[1] S/PRST/2007/7, resolution 1809 (2008), S/PRST/2009/3 and S/PRST/2009/26.
[2] Resolution 63/310, adopted in 2009.

to-desk" meetings between the United Nations and the African Union, bringing together working-level staff. At the strategic level, the Joint Task Force on Peace and Security, which brings together every six months the Under-Secretaries-General for Political Affairs, Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support with the African Union Commissioners for Peace and Security and for Political Affairs, was established in 2010 to provide guidance and coherence to the partnership at the highest levels and to identify areas for concerted joint action. UNOAU plays a coordinating role in those United Nations-African Union engagements.

12. The increase in the number of African Union peace support operations generated requests from Member States to enhance the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union. In its resolution 2033 (2012), the Security Council called upon the Secretary-General to maintain close consultations with the African Union and regional economic communities on peace and security challenges in Africa, and pledged support for further interaction between the Secretariat and the African Union Commission to exchange information and, as appropriate, coordinate in the preparation of recommendations, including through joint assessments. In resolution 2167 (2014), the Council expressed its determination to take effective steps to further enhance the relationship between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union. The General Assembly, in 2013, in its resolution 67/302, requested the United Nations system to intensify its assistance to the African Union, as appropriate, in strengthening the African Peace and Security Architecture, and emphasized the need to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of cooperation between the two organizations.

13. My special representatives and envoys, including my Special Representative to the African Union, Haile Menkerios, have regularly addressed the Peace and Security Council on issues on the agenda of the Peace and Security Council and the Security Council. In 2015 alone, the United Nations provided 40 such briefings and participated in a further 30 open sessions. Similarly, African Union commissioners and envoys have briefed the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies on a range of issues and the two bodies have increasingly exchanged views and engaged in discussions, including on the occasion of the tenth annual joint consultative meeting of the two bodies, in May 2016, when Somalia and Burundi were on the agenda.

14. The African Union is also strengthening its voice in the decision-making process of the Security Council and continues to work towards greater cohesion and harmonization of the positions of African member States. In December 2013, the African Union Commission convened a high-level meeting in an effort to improve coordination between the three African members of the Security Council, the Peace and Security Council and other African Union policy organs. The participants in the meeting, which has subsequently become an annual event, recommended the establishment of an African "A3" caucus within the Security Council to develop common positions and advocate African Union positions, measures to enhance the relationship between the Peace and Security Council and A3, greater alignment of the Peace and Security Council and Security Council agendas, and steps to strengthen the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations in New York.

15. After joint responses to certain crisis situations delivered positive results, both organizations expressed the need to move beyond ad hoc and reactive cooperation to a more strategic partnership built on an intensive, continuing and comprehensive

engagement to generate common approaches to shared challenges. In that context, in 2014, UNOAU developed, jointly with the Peace and Security Department of the African Union Commission, a joint framework for an enhanced partnership in peace and security. The framework called for joint or well-coordinated initiatives in conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacekeeping to leverage the political capital and capabilities of each organization across the conflict cycle, and recognized the need for continuous exchange of information on the structural and proximate causes of conflict and early warning signs, to facilitate aligned responses in conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping/peace support operations and post-conflict development. Discussions are under way to develop a more overarching framework, to be signed by the African Union Commission and the Secretariat.

16. Guided by its fiftieth anniversary solemn declaration in 2013, the African Union adopted, in 2015, Agenda 2063, its flagship framework for an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa. The Agenda sets eight aspirational goals to be attained in the coming five decades. Agenda 2063 and the Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda constitute a solid platform for continued United Nations-African Union cooperation and recognize that a prosperous Africa will be possible only when Africa is peaceful and stable. The African Union has also unveiled a road map for the period 2016-2020 for the African Peace and Security Architecture, which outlines measures for the achievement of the goal of silencing the guns to end all wars in Africa by 2020.

17. To mobilize international support for Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan, to raise global awareness about the challenges and opportunities for fostering peace and security in Africa and to galvanize political, technical and financial support for the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture road map for 2016-2020, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa has regularly organized, in partnership with the African Union, high-level panels and expert group meetings. The events have addressed emerging and critical peace and security issues in Africa and have sought to develop specific and actionable policy responses and recommendations. The Office has also supported the African Union in the formulation of common African positions and has worked towards ensuring complementarity and coherence between those positions and global policies and priorities.

18. Cooperation has also increased in the context of tackling new types of threats to international peace and security, such as the outbreak of Ebola virus disease in West Africa. UNOAU supported the planning, deployment and management of the African Union response to the outbreak in West Africa, including the mobilization of medical personnel and the liquidation of the African Union Support to the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa mission, and also contributed, through the deployment of technical personnel, to the broader effort provided by the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response.

19. In 2015, in its report (A/70/95-S/2015/446) the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations called for deepening United Nations-African Union partnership and proposed that the United Nations should take the decisive step of investing in and committing itself to the success of the African Union as a partner in addressing shared concerns. It also espoused the principles of early engagement, ongoing consultation, common understanding of conflicts, joint planning and an integrated approach throughout the conflict cycle. The Panel recognized that there was a need

for predictable financing for African Union peace support operations, but also highlighted the centrality of politics in preventing, managing and resolving conflict. It further emphasized the need for a partnership to be grounded on a clear division of labour based on respective comparative advantage, transparency, accountability and respect for international norms and standards.

IV. Strengthened partnership in conflict prevention and peacemaking

20. In line with the growing institutional collaboration, UNOAU, since 2014, has strengthened its capacity to facilitate regular horizon-scanning activities with the African Union Commission, the sharing of analysis, the development of common messages and, where possible, the harmonization of preventive diplomatic action and mediation efforts. UNOAU has also facilitated regular communication between Headquarters and field missions in Africa, and the African Union Commission on strategic questions, in order to advance common positions.

21. In my report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations on mediation (A/70/328), I detailed various models of cooperation and stressed the importance of coherence, coordination and complementarity in mediation engagements and the importance of genuine partnerships between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, including the African Union. By sharing experience and technical advice, UNOAU and the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat have supported the African Union in planning and developing the mediation support capability and structures of the Commission. In addition, senior African Union mediators participated in March and May 2015 in the United Nations high-level seminars on gender and inclusive mediation processes and, in August 2015, the Department coordinated the organization of a training course on conflict analysis for staff of UNOAU, the African Union, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the executive secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

22. There have also been some notable successes in collaboration on country-specific situations. For example, following the attempt in October 2014 by the President, Blaise Compaoré, to amend the Constitution in Burkina Faso to allow him to run for another term, the United Nations, through my Special Representative for West Africa, and the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) cooperated closely to resolve the ensuing crisis. They worked jointly to support the political transition in the country, including through the establishment of the International Follow-up and Support Group for the Transition in Burkina Faso. On 16 September 2015, the transition process was disrupted by a coup d'état led by the elite military presidential guard. Following the popular mobilization of activists across the country, supported by the regular armed forces, coupled with intense pressure from the international community, in particular from the United Nations, the African Union and ECOWAS, the leaders of the coup d'état were compelled to relinquish power and the country's transitional institutions were reinstated. The joint approach adopted by the United Nations, the African Union and ECOWAS, facilitated by UNOAU and the then United Nations Office for West Africa, contributed to the successful completion of the transition in

Burkina Faso, vividly illustrating the advantages of having a shared understanding, close collaboration and partnership in prevention.

23. The United Nations continues to work closely with the African Union, the East African Community and other partners to resolve the crisis in Burundi peacefully. In addition to the efforts led by my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, the United Nations Electoral Observer Mission in Burundi, my Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, my Special Representative to the African Union engaged with the leaders of Burundi and with other leaders in the region, in coordination with the African Union Commission Chairperson's Special Representative to the Great Lakes Region and Head of the African Union Liaison Office in Burundi to help to de-escalate rising tensions and mounting violence in Burundi. Following the deterioration of the situation in the country in late 2015, the international community intensified diplomatic efforts in search of a negotiated political process. UNOAU, supported by specialized technical expertise from Headquarters, provided operational support to the African Union for the development of contingency plans to address political and security concerns, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2248 (2015). At the request of the Security Council, I also deployed a team to Burundi to support the efforts of my Special Adviser, Jamal Benomar. Meanwhile, the Peace and Security Council authorized the deployment of the African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi, which was rejected by the Government. At its twenty-sixth ordinary session, held in January 2016, the Assembly of the African Union decided to hold off the deployment of the Mission and to dispatch a high-level delegation to engage with the authorities. In January 2016, a Security Council delegation visited the country to call upon all relevant stakeholders to pursue an inclusive and transparent dialogue and prevent an escalation of violence. In February, I visited the country and reiterated the strong commitment of the United Nations to peace, stability and development in Burundi and the broader region. Regional efforts to support an inclusive political dialogue are continuing, pursuant to Council resolutions 2279 (2016) and 2303 (2016).

24. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region work closely with the African Union Commission and the African Union facilitator to support efforts to resolve the political and electoral impasse in the country and to encourage all Congolese stakeholders to join in a political dialogue process and pave the way to peaceful and credible presidential and legislative elections. The Secretariat and the Mission are also providing dedicated political, electoral and communications expertise to the facilitator's team.

25. In Mali, the High Representative of the African Union and my Special Representative are working closely together towards advancing the implementation of the peace agreement and encouraging its signatory parties to commit themselves to undertaking key political and security reform, respecting the ceasefire and enhancing the inclusiveness of the peace process. In addition, the United Nations is cooperating with the African Union towards adjusting the underlying factors of insecurity and instability in the Sahel region through the coordinated implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. Furthermore, the United Nations is participating in the action taken within the framework of the Nouakchott Process on the enhancement of security cooperation and the

operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan region. In July 2016, the United Nations participated, along with other multilateral and bilateral partners, in an African Union-led technical assessment mission to Mali to help to develop regional options for tackling terrorism and transnational organized crime in the Sahelo-Saharan region.

26. Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the Libyan crisis has grown following the events that led to the overthrow of the former Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi, in 2011. The relationship gained new momentum with the appointment on 31 January 2016 of the African Union High Representative for Libya, Jakaya Kikwete, a former President of the United Republic of Tanzania. My Special Representative for Libya is working and coordinating closely with him, including through the International Contact Group for Libya. There is recognition by international partners of a need for greater cooperation on the political process and on security, and for greater coordination of support to Libya in efforts to combat Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

27. In Madagascar, the United Nations and the African Union have closely followed developments over the past two years. Progress towards national reconciliation has been limited. Tensions between the President and the National Assembly culminated in an attempt by some members of the Assembly to impeach the President in June 2015. In January 2016, Lakhdar Brahimi, a member of the African Union Panel of the Wise, visited the country to encourage dialogue in the wake of the impeachment crisis and to mobilize the support of the international community. I also visited the country, in May 2016. UNOAU engagement resulted in sharing of information on the situation, coordination of visits and alignment of messaging between the two organizations. UNOAU also participated in the needs assessment and design of African Union assistance in the area of security sector reform, complementing the assistance provided by the Peacebuilding Fund aimed at supporting security sector reform, good governance and assistance to the development of southern Madagascar.

28. UNOAU also supported joint United Nations and African Union engagement in the Comoros, where tension rose in late 2015 over the eligibility of a former President, Ahmed Abdallah Mohamed Sambi, to run in the presidential elections in 2016. In a joint statement, the United Nations and the African Union called for respect for the principle of alternation of the presidency among candidates from the islands of the Comoros, in line with the Constitution. A message from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission was conveyed to Mr. Sambi by the Envoy of the Chairperson, who was dispatched to the Comoros in November 2015. When tensions arose following both the first and second rounds of the elections, in February and April 2016, the African Union and the United Nations issued aligned statements in which they called for calm, the resolution of grievances through appropriate legal channels and respect for the decisions of the Constitutional Court. In April 2016, I dispatched my Special Representative to the African Union to the Comoros to consult stakeholders and support the continuing work of the United Nations country team. He called for the exercise of restraint and for the electoral institutions to function free from political influence. Following the visit, UNOAU engaged with the African Union on the deployment of an electoral observer mission for the partial rerun of elections called for by the Constitutional Court. The presence of the observers and of United Nations experts contributed to a smooth rerun and built up the confidence of the population in the electoral process.

29. UNOAU also supported the work of the Office of the Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan. Pursuant to the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in that context, the Office, in coordination with the United Nations-African Union Joint Special Representative for Darfur, worked closely with the African Union High-level Implementation Panel on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2046 (2012). The partnership and cooperation between the United Nations and the Panel is premised on the comparative advantage brought by a panel comprising, initially, three former African Heads of State with considerable influence on key stakeholders in both countries, supported by decisions of the Peace and Security Council and the Security Council.

30. In the Sudan, the 2012 framework for African Union and United Nations facilitation of the Darfur peace process continues to provide the basis for joint efforts to revitalize the peace process and to increase its inclusiveness in a broad national process. In accordance with that guiding principle, since the beginning of 2016, the United Nations-African Union Joint Special Representative for Darfur, UNOAU and the Office of the Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan have supported the African Union High-level Implementation Panel through renewed consultations with the Sudanese parties, urging them to enter into negotiations and take measures to build confidence among themselves, including by ceasing hostilities in Darfur and the Two Areas of Blue Nile and South Kordofan States. Those efforts culminated in the signing, in March 2016 by the Government of the Sudan and in August 2016 by opposition groups, of the Roadmap Agreement proposed by the Panel, representing a valuable step towards ending the war and addressing the multifaceted challenges facing the Sudan. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission and I welcomed the signing of the Agreement and urged all Sudanese parties to continue to work towards an agreement on cessation of hostilities, humanitarian access to conflict-affected areas and an inclusive national dialogue. The parties have as yet failed to reach agreement on a cessation of hostilities in Darfur and the Two Areas. I have strongly urged them to resume negotiations, abide by the Roadmap Agreement and refrain from any attempt to escalate the conflict in Darfur and the Two Areas.

31. In the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan, for example, violent conflict and insecurity have forcibly displaced populations, both within and across borders, with dire consequences for women and children. To help to develop strategies to prevent and address the root causes of forced migration within the context of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNOAU has been engaging with the African Union and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms. Furthermore, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the International Organization for Migration, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and others partnered with the African Union Commission to convene a high-level expert group meeting in Durban, South Africa, on 23 and 24 November 2015 on the theme "Conflict-induced migration in Africa: maximizing new opportunities to address its peace, security and inclusive development dimensions". The participants called for greater cooperation and a more integrated approach to tackling the root causes of forced displacement.

V. Enhanced cooperation in peacekeeping

32. Significant progress is also evident in the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on peace operations. This includes strengthened cooperation on current operations and the development of long-term institutional capacity of the African Union to plan, deploy and manage its operations. Collaboration is continuing to assess options for ensuring more predictable and sustainable financing for African Union peace support operations undertaken with the consent of the Security Council. Efforts are also under way to establish an effective framework and mechanisms to integrate human rights and protection concerns into the conduct of African Union peace support operations and to prevent and address international violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in such contexts.

33. UNOAU continued to work closely with the African Union to support AMISOM efforts to create the security conditions necessary for the political process in Somalia, in particular the 2016 elections. In March 2016, the United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security established a joint working group to provide recommendations on enhancing the effectiveness of AMISOM operations and address the issue of short-term and long-term funding shortfalls. The joint working group, comprising representatives of Headquarters, UNOAU, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, the African Union Commission and AMISOM, met in April 2016 and agreed on recommendations to enhance AMISOM effectiveness. Those recommendations were further discussed by the Military Coordination Committee at its meeting held on 9 May 2016, at which a decision was made to review the AMISOM concept of operations.

34. In resolution 2167 (2014), the Security Council welcomed developments regarding cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union, including the contribution of the European Union to the enhancement of African Union capacities, and encouraged regional and subregional organizations to strengthen and increase cooperation among them, including efforts to enhance their respective capacities in the maintenance of international peace and security. The United Nations, the African Union and the European Union are continuing to cooperate, with the support of UNOAU, on the development of a policy and guidelines on United Nations police in peacekeeping operations and special political missions. Continuing efforts between the United Nations and the African Union in that regard will maximize unity of effort.

35. United Nations-African Union cooperation on human rights is evolving. Support is increasingly being provided by UNOAU and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to strengthen the operational capacity of military, police and civilian peacekeepers, emphasizing the centrality of human rights in peacekeeping operations. UNOAU continues to work with OHCHR to strengthen human rights mechanisms in African Union peace and security operations generally, and in Somalia specifically, with enhanced training, planning, selection and screening measures, and is monitoring the establishment of the Civilian Casualty Tracking Analysis and Response Cell in AMISOM. Support has also been provided by UNOAU and OHCHR for the roll-out of the African Union aide-memoire on the protection of civilians. In October 2014, a workshop took stock of the integration of human rights in African Union peace support

operations and, in June 2015, OHCHR and UNOAU organized a joint workshop for UNOAU and African Union civilian staff and military planners on the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces.

36. The United Nations, through UNOAU, works closely with the African Union and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms towards the operationalization of the African Standby Force to enhance the capacity of the African Union to respond to violent conflicts on the continent, in line with the five-year workplan and the African Peace and Security Architecture road map for 2016-2020. UNOAU has provided extensive support to the Amani Africa II Field Training Exercise, one of the main instruments for evaluating the operational readiness of the Force, including its ability to respond rapidly to grave circumstances, such as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Four of the five regional standby forces have declared their full operational capability.

37. United Nations-African Union cooperation in countering terrorism and violent extremism is growing, underpinned by joint assessment missions and the development of subregional counter-terrorism strategies, and by joint pursuit of the harmonization and application of international and regional legal frameworks on counter-terrorism, especially with the support of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Office and its United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre within the Department of Political Affairs. The United Nations has also improved coordination with other regional security efforts, including support to the Nouakchott Process and to the African Police Cooperation Organization, which coordinates peace support operations aspects of African policing, including preventing and addressing serious organized crime, corruption and terrorism. At the United Nations Chiefs of Police Summit, held on 2 and 3 June 2016 at Headquarters, chiefs of police from 30 African Member States discussed, among other things, the complementarity between international (United Nations) policing and national efforts in addressing the impact of transnational threats; and reinforced strategic partnerships.

38. The United Nations-African Union partnership in Darfur is unprecedented. This model provides opportunities in terms of optimizing the respective political leverages of the United Nations and the African Union in support of the mediation led by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel in accordance with the Peace and Security Council communiqué of 12 September 2014, and of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur in the implementation of its mandate in a highly challenging operating environment. The experience has provided both organizations with important lessons for the future of peace operations.

39. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2167 (2014), the United Nations conducted a lessons learned exercise with the African Union and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms on the transitions from African Union to United Nations peace operations in Mali and the Central African Republic, to identify challenges and good practices and provide recommendations for future transitions. The exercise was conducted by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat, in cooperation with UNOAU and in consultation with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the Economic Community of Central African States, ECOWAS

and other relevant parties. The exercise underscored the importance of developing effective partnerships between the African Union and the United Nations in peacekeeping. I presented the results of the exercise in a letter to the Security Council in 2015 (S/2015/3), recommending the development of a joint benchmarking paper identifying the conditions that African Union missions need to meet before a transition takes place, a transition toolbox providing timelines that guide future transitional processes, and a lessons learned exercise on strengthening African Union peace support operations. While the African Union and the United Nations continue work to implement the first two recommendations, the lessons learned exercise has taken the form of a United Nations-African Union joint review of support and financing options for African Union peace operations and is expected to complement efforts to strengthen the African Union Peace Fund.

VI. Enhanced partnership in peacebuilding and the rule of law

40. The adoption on 27 April 2016 of General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture supported United Nations-African Union cooperation to work towards sustaining peace. On 28 July 2016, through a presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/12), the Security Council further stressed the importance of partnership and cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union and encouraged the Secretary-General, through UNOAU and the Peacebuilding Support Office, to begin holding regular exchanges, joint initiatives and information-sharing with the African Union Commission. On 12 May 2016, the United Nations partnered with the African Union in organizing a high-level meeting in New York on the theme "Sustaining peace: mechanisms, partnerships and the future of peacebuilding in Africa" to sustain the political momentum for peacebuilding in Africa and discuss ways to implement the outcome of the 2015 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. The outcome document of the meeting contained recommendations for strengthening peacebuilding partnerships between the United Nations and the African Union, the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution and the African Development Bank, and a call was made for adequate and predictable financing for peacebuilding, including for African tools and instruments to sustain peace. In addition, the African Solidarity Initiative is also a mechanism through which the African Union and the United Nations can more closely cooperate to mobilize support from within the continent for activities related to the African Union post-conflict reconstruction and development policy.

41. Six African countries are on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission. In April 2016, UNOAU worked closely with the Commission for the allocation of an initial Peacebuilding Fund grant of more than $2.2 million to the African Union to finance the activities of 32 human rights observers in Burundi for seven months. This first direct Fund grant to a regional organization illustrates the growing collaboration between the United Nations and the African Union, and provides the possibility of replication as the partnership with regional organizations on peace and security takes on added significance and grows in scale. UNOAU continues to work with the African Union towards the full deployment of its authorized 100 human rights observers and 100 military experts in Burundi, as part of international efforts to support the restoration of stability in the country. The Fund is also providing

OHCHR with $300,000 for training the observers and military experts and for joint monitoring with the African Union of human rights violations in the country.

42. Following initial capacity-building programmes with the African Union, four of the five rule of law and security institutions programmes (security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, mine action and police) have made the transition from the capacity-building phase to full partnership, whereby the African Union now has the capacity and knowledge to contribute on those cross-cutting issues in a manner that complements the contributions of United Nations and other actors. The added value of the African Union in these processes is its ability to develop consensus on continental policies, such as the 2013 policy framework on security sector reform; to foster regional and national ownership, as well as cooperation between the subregional organizations; and to utilize its support in transitional situations to build political support on these cross-cutting issues.

43. As at 2016, African Union programmes relating to the rule of law and security institutions have been broadly harmonized with regard to both structure and timelines. Four of the programmes now have three-year programme documents (2016-2018).

44. The United Nations and the African Union are planning an exchange of letters to provide strategic policy direction for collaboration with regard to cooperation concerning rule of law and security institutions. The United Nations is also exploring the option of signing a memorandum of understanding with the African Union on mine action services. The exchange of letters and programmatic agreements are aimed at solidifying inter-organizational cooperation and facilitate collaboration at the policy and programmatic levels. To ensure a coordinated approach and promote synergy, UNOAU is actively engaging with the African Union to strengthen the rule of law capacities of the African Union. Direct collaboration is also under way through United Nations cooperation programmes on counter-terrorism, small arms and light weapons, and child protection.

45. Achievements to be highlighted in the joint programmes include the deployment, for the first time, of security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration officers to African Union peace support operations and political missions, the establishment of standing bodies to coordinate the work of the African Union with regional economic communities/regional mechanisms and the validation of numerous operational guidance notes and policy documents. In addition, a joint United Nations-African Union-European Union-Southern African Development Community mission to Madagascar in October 2014 initiated the first comprehensive national security sector reform process, which continues to be supported by the four organizations. With regard to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, joint activities contributed to building a common approach in situations relating to the Lord's Resistance Army, the Central African Republic, Somalia, the Sudan and South Sudan. With regard to mine action, the African Union has facilitated cooperation between the Mine Action Service of the United Nations and national border commissions to demine border areas through the African Union Border Programme. The Service provided technical guidance and support to facilitate the implementation of the African Union Mine Action and Explosive Remnants of War Strategic Framework for 2014-2017. The Service also supported the African Union in the development of its safety handbook on landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices.

VII. Financing of African Union peace support operations

46. The African Union Chairperson and I have long advocated sustained, predictable and flexible funding mechanisms to support African Union peace support operations authorized by the Security Council. With the exception of AMISOM, which is partly supported by United Nations assessed contributions through the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, African Union peace operations have to date been funded almost exclusively by voluntary bilateral support and the African Peace Facility established by the European Union at the request of the African Union. The challenges faced by the African Union in funding its own peace support operations have made it difficult for it to ensure the successful implementation of mandates. In the cases of Mali and the Central African Republic, the timing of the transition from the African Union to the United Nations was partially a result of this lack of sustainable and predictable funding.

47. Recognizing the need to mobilize more resources from within the continent, in 2015, at its 24th ordinary session, the Assembly of the African Union agreed that the African Union should contribute up to 25 per cent of the cost of its peace and security efforts, including peace support operations, by 2020. This commitment is expected to enhance African ownership and agenda-setting of peace initiatives taken by the African Union.

48. In September 2015, the Peace and Security Council reiterated its commitment to raising up to 25 per cent of the continent's contribution to the cost of African Union peace and security interventions, and welcomed arrangements proposed by the Chairperson of the Commission for cases involving United Nations assessed contributions. Those proposed modalities include African Union commitment to strengthen funding and support capabilities, financial oversight, human rights and accountability mechanisms and capabilities, and capacities to plan, deploy and manage peace operations. In my report entitled "The future of United Nations peace operations: implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations" (A/70/357-S/2015/682), I welcomed the commitment of the African Union to self-reliance and urged Member States to consider how to respond to the initiative.

49. On 21 January 2016, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission appointed a former President of the African Development Bank, Donald Kaberuka, as High Representative for the African Union Peace Fund, tasked with exploring options to better operationalize the Fund and encourage sustainable funding, including from Africa.

50. Mr. Kaberuka's recommendations on financing the African Union were unanimously adopted at the twenty-seventh ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Kigali in July 2016. Significantly, African leaders agreed to implement the recommendations beginning in 2017, including instituting a 0.2 per cent levy on eligible imports into the continent to finance the African Union. The African Union expects to allocate $325 million to the Peace Fund in 2017, rising to $400 million in 2020, from the total amount raised from the import levy. The contributions will constitute the 25 per cent contribution to peace support operations deployed by African leaders.

51. Concurrently, the African Union and the United Nations initiated, early in 2016, a joint review of available mechanisms to finance and support African Union

peace operations authorized by the Security Council. The findings of the review are expected to assist stakeholders in determining how African Union peace operations can be most effectively supported in the future.

VIII. Role of the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms

52. The regional economic communities/regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa are an integral part of the African Peace and Security Architecture. They have a good understanding of regional conflicts by virtue of their proximity and are often the first responders when conflict erupts. Given this crucial role, UNOAU continues to advocate and work with the African Union to improve coordination with the communities/mechanisms, as well as consultation and common messaging and action, where feasible, to address threats and challenges to peace and security. In an effort to further coordinate United Nations interaction with the African Union and promote coherence with the communities/mechanisms through United Nations presences in the regions, UNOAU convened a meeting of all United Nations regional presences in Africa in November 2015 to promote coordination and collaboration, the exchange of information, a common understanding of threats to peace and security, and joint action. Enhanced tripartite understanding and coordination between the United Nations, the African Union and ECOWAS were evident in the common approach to the crisis in Burkina Faso in 2014 and 2015.

53. The international contact group model provides a platform for further sustained efforts to achieve more unified international intervention on issues of peace and security. In the Central African Republic and Burkina Faso, international contact groups facilitated improved tripartite leadership, collaboration and coordination on some of the most difficult challenges to peace. The model, which comprises a broad range of stakeholders and partners, has the additional advantage of limiting opportunities for spoilers to manipulate the varied interests at play in conflict situations, providing a platform for the harmonization of positions through engagement and discussions around common goals.

54. In the Central African Republic, the decision by the African Union to maintain a political presence, the African Union Mission for the Central African Republic and Central Africa, following the transfer of authority from the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, with the Economic Community of Central African States also setting up a political presence in the country, required enhanced cooperation in support of the political process and the transition. Following the election of Faustin Archange Touadera as President and the end of the transition, new mechanisms are being considered to strengthen cooperation with the host authorities, including through a framework of mutual accountability. Regular United Nations briefings to the Peace and Security Council on the political process were informed by, among other things, coordinated initiatives of the three organizations at the local level. In Burundi, my Special Adviser, the East African Community-led facilitation and the African Union, through its Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, continue to closely coordinate the efforts of the international community to resolve the political crisis

through an inclusive and credible political dialogue. In South Sudan, my Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan provided extensive support to the mediation process led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. This resulted in the signing of the peace agreement in August 2015 and the establishment of the Transitional Government of National Unity in April 2016. In Burkina Faso in 2014, ECOWAS, the African Union, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and UNOAU worked together to prevent a complete breakdown of stability following the popular uprising. Through an international contact group and, subsequently, the International Follow-Up and Support Group for the Transition in Burkina Faso, the international community supported Burkina Faso through a successful transition and the peaceful transfer of power.

IX. Strengthening the United Nations Office to the African Union

55. Since the establishment of UNOAU in 2010, the United Nations-African Union partnership on peace and security has grown in scale and complexity, as outlined herein. The relationship has evolved from a series of ad hoc interactions and capacity-building initiatives to a more structured and sustained political and strategic partnership, which recognizes that no one organization alone can tackle the challenges presented by emerging and continuing conflicts in Africa. The Office has assumed a critical role in nurturing and promoting this strategic partnership to facilitate effective, timely and synchronized United Nations-African Union approaches to conflict prevention and management. UNOAU has also streamlined engagement between the two organizations on peace and security, leading to coordinated and consistent United Nations support to the African Union with regard to both short-term operational requirements and long-term institutional capacity-building.

56. UNOAU underwent a strategic review in 2013 and a civilian staffing review in 2015, both conducted jointly by the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support of the Secretariat, in consultation with the African Union Commission and Member States. The strategic review recommended that both the management and the political components of the Office be strengthened to enable UNOAU to more effectively engage, support and backstop efforts, both at United Nations Headquarters and more broadly, to enhance conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacemaking capacities. Both reviews recommended a restructuring of UNOAU. The restructuring would respond to the evolving and increasingly complex peace and security threats in Africa, which are placing greater demands on the African Union and the United Nations, as well as on the partnership between the two organizations. It recognizes the importance of continuous engagement, in particular at the senior, decision-making levels, with the African Union Commission, members of the Peace and Security Council, and partners. UNOAU therefore requires both a sufficient complement of staff and staff of appropriate seniority to meet effectively the growing demands of its mandate.

57. The General Assembly considered the proposed restructuring of UNOAU in June 2016 and requested me to resubmit proposals following a review of UNOAU, for consideration during the main part of its seventy-first session. Given the continuing and rapid evolution of the United Nations partnership with the African Union from an ad hoc partnership to a strategic partnership, I plan to conduct an assessment of United Nations-African Union cooperation, including the structure and resource capacity of UNOAU to meet the growing demands of the partnership.

X. Observations and recommendations

58. As I observed in my report on the implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (A/70/357-S/2015/682), I approach the end of my tenure as Secretary-General with profound concern over the many challenges facing the United Nations. The scale and complexity of conflict today, and the suffering that such conflict creates, threaten the international order. There is an urgent need for new and stronger ways to address international peace and security challenges. Stronger partnerships with regional organizations, in particular with the African Union, can enable us to respond early, swiftly, coherently and decisively to prevent and manage conflict.

59. I welcome the progress made in improving consultation and coordination between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. The annual consultations between the two bodies, the most recent of which was held in New York in May, are opportune and need to be continued. I believe, however, there is scope for further progress, in particular with regard to better coordinating the decisions of both bodies. In this respect, effective follow-up to the relevant provisions of the joint communiqués issued at the end of the annual meeting will go a long way towards enhancing the effectiveness of the two bodies' combined efforts. This includes joint field visits and consultations between the President of the Security Council and the Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council.

60. Security Council decisions on transitions from African Union to United Nations peacekeeping operations will continue to be addressed on a case-by-case basis, guided by clearly defined goals and comparative advantages between the two organizations. There is, however, a need to more clearly articulate and define a common set of guiding benchmarks for the transition to United Nations peacekeeping operations. This is particularly pertinent in the context of discussions about sustainability of funding for African Union peace support operations, and the work of the High Representative for the African Union Peace Fund.

61. The commitment of African leaders to financing the African Union, including its peace support operations, is commendable. It is imperative that Member States seize the momentum and agree on how best to respond to the efforts of self-reliance. My forthcoming joint review with the African Union on the available mechanisms to finance and support African Union peace operations authorized by the Security Council should provide a basis for determining how African Union peace operations can be most effectively supported in the future.

62. In the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (A/70/95-S/2015/446) and my report on the implementation of its recommendations, emphasis is laid on the primacy of political solutions to conflict situations. In that regard, there is recognition that joint early analysis, information-sharing and common understanding between the United Nations and the African Union have led to early action that averted or prevented conflicts from escalating, as exemplified in Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Comoros and Madagascar. It is imperative that such efforts be better supported and provided with the necessary resources, in order to enable special envoys and facilitators to perform their good offices functions with greater effectiveness. In addition, if the objectives of the African Union initiative on

silencing the guns by 2020 are to be achieved, greater United Nations support and coordination with the African Union is needed.

63. The role of UNOAU in strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union is crucial. Strengthening our partnership with the African Union and with the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms will remain a priority for the United Nations in the foreseeable future. Strengthening the partnership requires intensifying day-to-day engagement to share views and analysis, seek common understanding of the issues and develop proposals for joint or coordinated action to address them. It involves reaching out to the whole of the United Nations and the African Union, to ensure that both organizations draw on all relevant contributions and, as much as possible, ensure coherence.

64. The capacity of UNOAU to perform its responsibilities and engage effectively with the African Union, regional economic communities/regional mechanisms and bilateral partners is critical as the demands on the partnership have grown exponentially over the past few years. Strengthening its capacity would help to ensure enhanced ability for effective partnership with the African Union and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms, at the appropriate level of seniority, to address the continent's peace and security challenges.

65. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the African Union and its member States and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms for their continued cooperation with the United Nations in efforts to address challenges to peace and security in Africa. I also wish to express my appreciation to my Special Representative to the African Union, as well as the staff of UNOAU and all United Nations entities working with the African Union for their efforts to advance peace and security in the region.

United Nations S/2016/781

Security Council

Distr.: General
16 September 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 12 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, and with reference to the letter dated 16 August 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/719), requesting the circulation of the letter of an entity engaged in crimes and violence in Syria, I wish to bring the following to your attention:

That entity and its supporters, by accusing the Islamic Republic of Iran of supporting the use of chemical weapons and other prohibited weapons, insidiously intend to mislead the members of the United Nations. It is evident that Iran, as the last victim of the mass use of chemical weapons by Saddam Hussein's regime, which committed such heinous crimes with the help and support of many, including certain countries in the region, and as a committed State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, has always condemned the use of these weapons by anybody, anywhere, and has always declared its objection to such use.

The very act of submitting such baseless propaganda against a State Member of the United Nations by another State Member of the United Nations to be circulated as a United Nations document runs counter to the very purposes and principles of the United Nations, which consist of, inter alia, developing friendly relations among nations and peacefully resolving international disputes.

This act also amounts to misusing an established practice at the United Nations and employing it in the service of spreading lies and distorting facts, which can only serve shortsighted political interests and narrow agendas. This certainly aggravates, rather than eases, tensions and is contrary to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

As a member of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and a victim of these weapons, the Islamic Republic of Iran has always warned against the use of these inhumane weapons by all, especially by terrorists, following the savagery and barbaric crimes perpetrated against the Syrian and Iraqi peoples by extremist groups and their supporters. It is imperative that all States Members of the United Nations adopt a responsible and serious approach to focus on the real challenges that jeopardize peace and security in our region.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gholamali **Khoshroo**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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United Nations S/2016/782

Security Council

Distr.: General
13 September 2016

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General concerning the credentials of the alternate representative of France on the Security Council

Pursuant to rule 15 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Secretary-General wishes to report that he has received a letter dated 13 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations stating that Mrs. Anne Gueguen has been appointed alternate representative of France on the Security Council.

In the opinion of the Secretary-General, that communication constitutes adequate provisional credentials.

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United Nations S/2016/783

Security Council

Distr.: General
16 September 2016
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 13 September 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

In keeping with its direct support of armed terrorist groups, something of which all countries and peoples of the world are aware, Israel has carried out a series of blatant attacks against the territory and armed forces of the Syrian Arab Republic during recent weeks. Those attacks are a product of the strategic alliance between Israel and those groups, particularly the Nusrah Front (Front for the Conquest of the Levant). The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has notified the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the Security Council of the ongoing Israeli attacks against Syria.

In the early morning hours of Tuesday, 13 September 2016, Israeli warplanes attacked our military positions in the Qunaytirah countryside in support of the terrorist organizations, which are being pummelled by the Syrian Arab Army. Syrian air defence forces responded to the hostile aircraft and brought down an Israeli warplane south-west of Qunaytirah and a reconnaissance aircraft west of the town of Sa'sa' in south-west Rif Dimashq. There is no doubt that this new Israeli aggression is a desperate attempt to raise the morale of the terrorist groups, which are collapsing because of the heavy defeats and casualties they have suffered in the Qunaytirah countryside and other parts of the Syrian Arab Republic. This aggression is also part of the direct support that Israel has provided for the attacks that the Nusrah Front and associated terrorist groups have carried out against defenceless villages and civilians in Dar'a and Qunaytirah.

In the past four years, the reports submitted by the Secretary-General to the Security Council in connection with the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) have noted Israel's blatant violations of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement.

Israel is clearly cooperating with the terrorist organizations; it supplies them with weapons and facilitates the movement of terrorists, along with their arms and munitions, within the occupied strip. Israel also cooperated with those organizations when, more than two years ago, they overran United Nations forces positions along the line of separation in collusion with the Qatari regime and occupied UNDOF positions. Israel makes no secret of its support for the armed terrorist groups or their presence in the area of separation in the occupied Syrian Golan. The most damning and clearest evidence of Israel's alliance with the Nusrah Front and other terrorist

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organizations is the fact that Israel has treated more than 2,000 terrorists in Israeli hospitals. This Israeli aggression once again reveals the deep relationships that exist between Israel and terrorist groups in Syria, something that we had warned of in many letters addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the Security Council.

Syria calls on the Security Council and the Secretary-General to take all measures set out in the Charter of the United Nations to punish Israel and compel it to cease its aggression. They must also call on it to cease immediately its support for and protection of terrorists and their armed groups, particularly given that the Nusrah Front is included in the Security Council list of terrorist entities. Those members of the Security Council that defend Israel on principle cannot ignore the danger posed by Israel's alliance with the terrorist Nusrah Front (Front for the Conquest of the Levant), regardless of what it is called, and despite meaningless justifications.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mounzer **Mounzer**
Minister Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

United Nations S/2016/784

Security Council

Distr.: General
13 September 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 13 September 2016 from the President of the General Assembly addressed to the President of the Security Council

Over the course of the seventieth session of the General Assembly, I have had the pleasure of working closely with the Security Council and the entire membership of the General Assembly to advance the process to select and appoint the next Secretary-General.

As I near the end of my term, I feel it important to provide a recap of this historic cooperation and some of the details that made this year's process so unique. I also wish to share some expectations of the membership of the Organization with the Security Council as regards the remainder of the process as well as ways to further improve future selection and appointment processes.

The formal process to date

Throughout the seventieth session, the General Assembly and the Security Council worked diligently together to advance a selection and appointment process that is transparent, inclusive and effective, guided by Assembly resolution 69/321.

Monthly coordination meetings with the presidency of the Security Council from the beginning of my term as President of the General Assembly, starting in September 2015, and an opportunity to brief the Council in October 2015 at its open debate on working methods, set the tone for the rest of the session. These were followed by the formal commencement of the process in December 2015 through the circulation, by the President of the Security Council and I, of a joint letter (A/70/623-S/2015/988), formally soliciting candidates for the position, describing the overall process and establishing a clearly defined nomination process — in short, the first-ever job announcement for the position of the world's chief diplomat.

Over the course of the past nine months, 12 candidates have, to date, been presented and their presentations have been jointly circulated to the membership. In line with General Assembly resolution 69/321, each candidate has been provided the opportunity to participate in informal dialogues with the entire Assembly and it is gratifying that all 12 candidates presented thus far have embraced that opportunity.

The dialogues provided the same platform and equal time for each candidate and have been based on a format defined in my letters dated 25 February 2016 (A/70/877) and 29 March 2016 (A/70/878). Candidates were invited to provide a vision statement in advance of the informal dialogue, laying out their vision of the

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challenges and opportunities facing the United Nations and the next Secretary-General. This enabled Member States to acquaint themselves with the overall views of each candidate in advance of the dialogue, and also allowed for short opening statements during the informal dialogues, thereby permitting a more interactive dialogue. Indeed, both individual Member States and groups deserve praise for scrupulously respecting the time provided for questions, allowing equal and balanced access to all and minimizing repetition.

Civil society and the wider global public have also been deeply engaged in the process thus far. Civil society questions, identified through an open and inclusive process, have been an integral part of the informal dialogues, and the use of videoconferences, together with the live streaming of the dialogues, has allowed us to reach people across the world, and for them to reach us. Public engagement has been further enhanced through the use of the official website for my Presidency of the seventieth session of the General Assembly, which has been continuously updated with information about the candidates (presentation of candidatures, biographies, vision statements, and withdrawal letters where applicable) and the process.

In addition, and distinct from the mandated informal dialogues, I took the initiative to organize a global town hall meeting in partnership with the Al-Jazeera media network. Inviting all declared candidates to participate in the debate, broadcast live across the world, brought the process to a broader public and allowed for a more interactive format with all candidates at the same time.

The value of a transparent and inclusive process

The informal meetings with candidates and the overall transparent and inclusive nature of the process to date have been of significant value.

First, through generating some of the best discussions I believe have occurred among the membership about the role of the United Nations and its Secretary-General in addressing our many global challenges, the process has shone a light on the individual and collective aspirations for the Organization.

Second, building on the public participation process for agreeing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the process has transmitted a critical message to the wider world: the United Nations wants to hear from you, benefits from hearing from you and is ultimately accountable to you.

Third, the process thus far has demonstrated the capacity of the General Assembly to fulfil its role as envisaged in Article 97 of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the ability of the Assembly and the Security Council to work effectively together in a complementary fashion.

Fourth, a number of key messages resonated throughout the dialogues in terms of what the overall membership is seeking from the next Secretary-General, messages to which I believe the Security Council must now give due consideration in its own deliberations.

Member States expressed, for example, a clear desire to see a strong, independent and courageous Secretary-General who will make full use of the powers provided for in the Charter. Likewise, a strong call was made to welcome the first-ever woman as Secretary-General and, more broadly, a person who is

committed to ensuring that the United Nations both promotes and embodies gender equality at all levels, a call that I personally support. Through the many questions on substantive, organizational, administrative and financial matters, the membership is evidently looking for a candidate who has the skills to transform the tools, capacities and culture of the United Nations in order to respond to today's major challenges: threats to peace and security; implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; greater enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms; and the prioritization of the world's most vulnerable countries and peoples throughout.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the revitalized process has significantly improved our prospects of securing the best possible candidate to lead the Organization. We have attracted six male and six female candidates from across three geographical regions, the largest number of formally presented candidates ever nominated for the position. And to date, nine are still participating in the process. Each candidate has strengths and weaknesses and many of those were highlighted through the informal dialogues. Both the Security Council and the General Assembly are therefore entering the closing stages of the process with their eyes very much wide open.

Scope for further improvement

While the selection and appointment process thus far has been significantly improved when compared with previous processes, there remains considerable scope for improvement.

The issue of providing adequate lead-in time for proper preparation and handover to the incoming Secretary-General, for example, could be addressed through the setting of some form of deadline and a more specific timeline for the overall process. For instance, it would seem both desirable and feasible for the membership to commit to concluding the process on entering the final quarter of the calendar year preceding the beginning of the new Secretary-General's term. A commitment to such a timeline would necessarily have implications for the timing of all steps now established as integral parts of the process.

In addition, the new standard of transparency and inclusivity should be seen as the bar, not the ceiling, and should be maintained throughout the entirety of the selection and appointment process. For example, as I have made clear in my statements in connection with each of the informal straw polls of the Security Council, I have been disappointed by the lack of transparency exercised by the Council in its subsequent communication about the straw polls. It is neither respectful of the rest of the membership of the United Nations nor fair to the candidates themselves, for the results to be communicated through leaks from Council members to the world's media.

Lastly, Member States have, in the course of the process, suggested that the General Assembly conduct its own informal straw poll on the candidates who have participated in informal dialogues, before the Security Council starts its own consideration of the candidates, to link into that process. While I find merit in the proposal, it is also clear that no such mandate currently exists. Going forward, it may be worth considering how to establish such an exercise or exploring other ways to ensure that the membership's assessment of the candidates can feed into the selection process of the Council.

The remainder of the current selection and appointment process

The current selection and appointment process has now entered into a decisive phase and there are a number of pitfalls that both the Security Council and General Assembly must work to avoid.

While General Assembly resolution 69/321 allows for the presentation of candidates at any time during the process, through the rounds of informal dialogues, a clear expectation has emerged that any additional candidates should, subsequent to the joint circulation of the letter formally presenting the candidate, participate in an informal dialogue with the General Assembly as a first step, prior to their inclusion in the Security Council's considerations.

In addition, a large portion of the General Assembly has called for the appointment of co-facilitators, preferably before the Security Council reaches a decision on its recommendation, to draft the Assembly resolution appointing the next Secretary-General. While I understand that such a demand is not popular with some Council members, in my view it is entirely consistent with the spirit of transparency and inclusivity with which the process has been imbued to date. Furthermore, the purpose of appointing co-facilitators must be to reach a consensus appointment resolution. At the same time, it is critically important that all Member States commit to ensuring that the next Secretary-General will not be prevented from receiving adequate preparation time before taking office, as a result of wrangling among Member States. In the end, whatever the outcome, the General Assembly must unite around the next Secretary-General.

Fulfilling our joint responsibility

As I conclude my mandate as President of the seventieth session of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Security Council members for their cooperation on the process during the session.

I hope that the standard of transparency and inclusivity we have established together will be replicated and built on for future processes and extended to other areas of work of both the Security Council and the General Assembly. I also hope that the good cooperation between the two organs on the subject can serve as an example for cooperation on other issues of common concern.

Lastly, as the Security Council deliberates on its recommendation, I sincerely hope that each and every member, permanent and non-permanent, will be mindful of the expectations of the entire membership and the wider global public. I encourage you to do your utmost to fulfil your responsibility to help the General Assembly secure the best possible candidate to lead this great Organization.

(*Signed*) Mogens **Lykketoft**

United Nations A/71/388–S/2016/785

General Assembly
Security Council

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19 September 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Item 41 of the provisional agenda*
Question of Cyprus

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 14 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I enclose herewith two separate annexes recording the infringements of international air traffic regulations and violations of the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey (see annex I) and the illegal use of closed ports by Turkish warships during the month of August 2016 (see annex II). It should also be noted that Turkish commercial aircraft systematically use the illegal airport of Tympou.

The actions of Turkey are clearly aimed at undermining the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus, bolstering the continuing de facto division and upgrading the secessionist entity's status by claiming a purported airspace over the occupied territory of the Republic. Additionally, Turkey continues to systematically harass civilian and military aircraft within the Nicosia flight information region via radio calls. Meanwhile, Nicosia flight information region infringements and violations of the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus continue unabated. Turkey's policy of persistently breaching international law and defying international rules and regulations puts the safety of international civil aviation at risk, has a negative impact on the stability of the region and causes difficulties for air traffic over Cyprus.

It should further be underlined that the continuation of Turkey's illegal actions creates tension during a critical period for the successful outcome of the ongoing negotiation process for a peaceful comprehensive solution of the Cyprus problem.

On behalf of my Government, I strongly protest against the continuing infringements of international air traffic regulations and the violations of the national airspace and the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey and appeal for their immediate cessation. The Republic of Cyprus reiterates, in this respect, its call for adherence to the principle of sovereignty and non-interference enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

* A/71/150.

16-16190 (E) 220916

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I would be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 41 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nicholas **Emiliou**

Annex I to the letter dated 14 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Airborne violations

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
5 August	1846-1904	One GLF-5 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia flight information region (FIR) and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia area control centre (ACC).
8 August	0903-1334	Two Cougar Turkish military helicopters infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC.
9 August	0735-0933	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC.
13 August	0902-1040	One S-70 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC.
15 August	0743-0911	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC.
23 August	0738-0920	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC.
25 August	0742-0907	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC.
29 August	0736-0905	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC.
30 August	2154-2210	One Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
31 August	0735-0902	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC.
	1917-1932	One GLF-4 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC.

Annex II to the letter dated 14 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Naval violations

Date	*Nature of violation*
23 August	One P-334 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces.
23-24 August	One A-1600 Turkish vehicle carrier vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta.
25-26 August	One P-349 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta.

United Nations S/2016/786

Security Council

Distr.: General
16 September 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 14 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I wish to bring the following to your attention:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been the victim of Houthi militia rebels and forces loyal to the former President, Ali Saleh, who have engaged in indiscriminate and irresponsible targeting, including through rocket attacks and ballistic missile attacks, on the Saudi border as well as within Saudi Arabia's territorial limits, resulting in hundreds of civilian fatalities and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, including damage to schools and hospitals.

These attacks were launched against several provinces in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including Najran, Jazan and Asir. Saudi territories were exposed to close to 30 ballistic missile attacks. On 31 August 2016, Houthi rebel militias and their supporters fired a ballistic missile of the type "Zilzal-3" ("Earthquake-3") at the city of Najran, in the south of Saudi Arabia. The "Zilzal-3" rocket is a short-range ballistic missile produced in Iran.

In violation of Security Council resolution 2216 (2015), weapons and ammunition have been supplied to the Houthi rebel militias in Yemen by Iran. On multiple occasions, Iranian illicit weapons were intercepted by several Member States and the Combined Maritime Forces. These maritime seizures of weapons, including by Australia, France and the United States of America, uncovered huge shipments of illicit arms confirmed to have originated in Iran. On 4 April 2016, the United States Fifth Fleet released a statement confirming "for the third time in recent weeks, international naval forces operating in the waters of the Arabian Sea seized a shipment of illicit arms ... which the United States assessed originated in Iran and was likely bound for Houthi insurgents in Yemen". Multiple reports of similar interdictions documented the seizure of large quantities of weapons and ammunition, among them Iranian-made anti-tank missiles, thousands of assault rifles, Dragunov sniper rifles, AK-47s, spare barrels, mortar tubes and hundreds of rocket-propelled grenades, RBG missile launchers and other illicit arms. Moreover, the nationality of most of the crew of the vessels intercepted was assessed to be Iranian.

The smuggling of illicit arms to Houthi-Saleh rebel militias not only is a flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions but also constitutes a direct and

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tangible threat to the security of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Yemen and the region, as well as the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reaffirms its right to take all appropriate measures to counter the threats by the Iran-funded and Iran-backed Houthi-Saleh rebel militias and will spare no effort in protecting the security and safety of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Yemen and its people and the region, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

The Houthi rebel militias and forces loyal to the former President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, and their foreign ally must be held accountable for their continued irresponsible and criminal behaviour. Complacency will only encourage further violations jeopardizing the safety and security of the Yemeni people, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the region. Moreover, it will undermine the credibility of the Council's resolutions and further impede a political settlement of the crisis in Yemen.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls upon the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility and take the appropriate and the necessary measures against the spoilers of the Yemeni political transition and those who have violated the relevant Council resolutions, especially resolution 2216 (2015), adopted by the Council under Chapter VII of the Charter. In particular, we further urge the Council to take all measures necessary to demand that Iran comply with all the relevant Council resolutions and cease and desist from any illegal actions in Yemen.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reiterates its support for the important work of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, to reach a comprehensive agreement to end the conflict in Yemen, in accordance with the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference and its implementation mechanism and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Abdallah Y. **Al-Mouallimi**
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2016/787

Security Council

Distr.: General
15 September 2016

Original: English

Identical letters dated 14 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I am writing to you once again with regard to the continued spillover of the conflict in Syria into Israel. In the past 48 hours alone, there have been four separate instances in which rockets launched from Syria landed in Israeli territory, risking the lives of Israeli citizens.

On 12 September, at 6.45 p.m., a 130-mm mortar shell was fired from Syria and landed in the vicinity of Mount Avital, approximately 800 m inside Israeli territory.

On 13 September, at 3.20 p.m., a mortar fired from Syria landed in Israeli territory near the Ein Zivan kibbutz. On the same day, at 5 p.m., two additional mortars from Syria landed in the vicinity of the Ein Zivan kibbutz and the town of Majdal Shams.

Just today, another mortar shell from Syria landed in the northern part of the Golan Heights.

Following these incidents of cross-border fire, the Israel Defense Forces took defensive measures against the sources of the shooting.

Despite repeated warning messages relayed by Israel to the Syrian side, there has been an increase in cross-border fire from Syria into Israeli territory. During the past month alone, there have been a total of six instances of spillover of the conflict in Syria into Israel.

Israel holds the Government of Syria responsible for all actions that take place on Syrian territory.

Israel has no interest in getting involved in the conflict in Syria, nor does it seek an escalation, but will not tolerate cross-border fire from Syria of any kind and will take all measures necessary to protect its civilians, territory and interests.

Israel demands that the Syrian regime abide by the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Danny **Danon**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

16-15978 (E) 160916

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United Nations A/71/379–S/2016/788

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
15 September 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Item 69 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 14 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to attach herewith the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine regarding the ongoing actions of the Russian Federation towards the citizens of Ukraine (see annex).

I would appreciate your having the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 69 (c) of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/71/150.

16-15990 (E) 190916

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Annex to the letter dated 14 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine regarding the ongoing actions of the Russian Federation towards the citizens of Ukraine

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine expresses its firm protest against the actions, illegal and humiliating to people's dignity, by the Russian Federation towards the citizens of Ukraine who are being unlawfully kept by that State on its territory as well as in the occupied parts of Ukraine.

Despite repeated strong calls from the Ukrainian side and the international community and international obligations assumed by the Russian side, the Russian Federation continues to keep at least 29 citizens of Ukraine unlawfully in custody; dozens of citizens are being persecuted in the occupied Crimea; 16 citizens of Ukraine are considered missing; and 115 Ukrainians are being kept as hostages in the Donbas.

We have to admit that the capture, torture and persecution of Ukrainian citizens have become common practice for Moscow.

The cases of Oleg Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko, Ilmi Umerov, Ahtem Ciygoz and of many others are telling examples of the return of the Russian Federation to the political repressions and trials known from the era of Stalinism. It flagrantly violates all possible international legal standards in the protection of human rights, in particular, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The latest decision by the occupying Russian authorities to reject claims by the side of the defence in the case of the Deputy Chairman of the Mejlis, Ilmi Umerov, as well as his previous placement in a psychiatric hospital, are vivid illustrations of such inhuman policies.

There is an understanding in Ukraine that only the united and persistent efforts of the world leaders and the democratic community, to which human rights and human dignity constitute the highest priority, can overcome the present tyranny of the Russian authorities.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine reiterates its appeal to the international community to exert all the legal and political measures possible towards Russia for it to cease its totalitarian practice of suppressing human rights and freedom of speech and to immediately release all Ukrainian political prisoners and hostages.

United Nations A/71/387–S/2016/789

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
16 September 2016
English
Original: Russian

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Item 109 of the provisional agenda*
Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 13 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the communiqué of the fifteenth Meeting of Heads of Special Services, Security Agencies and Law-Enforcement Organizations, held in St. Petersburg on 27 and 28 July 2016 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 109, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) V. **Churkin**

* A/71/150.

16-16013 (E) 190916 200916

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Annex to the letter dated 13 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Communiqué of the fifteenth Meeting of Heads of Special Services, Security Agencies and Law-Enforcement Organizations

On 27 and 28 July 2016, in St. Petersburg (Russian Federation), 100 delegations from 63 States and four international organizations: the United Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the European Union,

Committed to establishing a global coalition against terrorism, with the United Nations in a central coordinating role, on the basis of the norms and principles of international law, including the principles of equality and sovereignty of States and non-interference in their internal affairs,

Reaffirming the high status of the forum as an association of national competent authorities responsible for countering terrorism in their States,

Acknowledging the need for intransigence in combating the terrorist threat and the renunciation of double standards,

Drawing upon national experience in combating manifestations of terrorism,

Considering:

- The threats posed by foreign terrorist fighters returning to their countries of origin from regions with elevated terrorist activity,
- The continuous improvement in the level of terrorist training regarding the use of information and communication technologies, including the Internet, for terrorist purposes,
- The uncontrolled spread of jihadist ideology and radicalization of the population, especially youth,
- The growing trend of terrorist organizations using suicide bombers,
- The ongoing terrorist threats to major international events,
- The strengthening of criminal ties between organized criminal groups and international terrorist organizations,

Unanimously reaffirmed the need:

- To improve effective communication in combating foreign terrorist fighters in the context of implementing Security Council resolution 2178 (2014),
- To enhance the monitoring of national online space and develop a procedure for joint work to freeze terrorist resources online, taking into account the specific legislation of the parties involved,
- To combine efforts in the search for relevant forms of cooperation to counter the radicalization of the population and its involvement in extremist and terrorist activities,
- For a rapid response and the development of joint approaches to tackle the use of suicide bombers by terrorist organizations.

Participants decided:

1. To improve the efficient use of the international counter-terrorism database in order to create a single information space for the intelligence community to monitor foreign terrorist fighters.

2. To continue work on the Joint Prospective Threats Assessment analytical document, as part of collaborative efforts by the intelligence community to track new terrorist threats and develop preventive measures to neutralize them.

3. To use the machinery put in place by the Meeting to communicate real and potential threats, and joint responses to them, when providing security for major international events, including the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) 2017 Confederations Cup and the FIFA 2018 World Cup in Russia. To continue the activities of the Working Group of Security Intelligence and Law-Enforcement Experts on Major International Events Security.

4. The intelligence community shall participate in the elaboration of norms and rules of behaviour for States in cyberspace, in keeping with the recommendations of General Assembly resolution 70/237 regarding existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security.

5. The sixteenth Meeting of Heads of Special Services, Security Agencies and Law-Enforcement Organizations shall be held in 2017 in the Russian Federation and the drafting of the agenda for that event shall proceed.

United Nations S/2016/790

Security Council

Distr.: General
19 September 2016
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 17 September 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

At 5 p.m. on 17 September 2016, the air force of the United States of America launched a brutal assault on the positions of the Syrian Arab Army in the Jabal Thardah area around Dayr al-Zawr airport. Five American aircraft attacked the location for one hour. The organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) had for several years made repeated attempts to gain control of the area, but our courageous armed forces had always prevented it from doing so. The available information indicates that the United States of America launched the attack in a deliberate and premeditated manner, in an effort to pursue its strategy of perpetuating the terrorists' war against the Syrian Arab Army, which has stood firm against the terrorist organizations and all their backers. That theory is borne out by the fact that ISIL attacked and gained control of that location immediately after the American aggression. The American bombardment thus prepared the way for ISIL to occupy the area, showing that there was prior coordination between ISIL and American forces.

This barefaced act of aggression claimed dozens of lives among the ranks of the Syrian Arab Army. The latter has been defending the tens of thousands of civilians who remain besieged by the terrorist organization ISIL in the city of Dayr al-Zawr. It has protected them from the savage attacks carried out by ISIL and its State sponsors. This cowardly act on the part of America is a flagrant and fateful attack on the Syrian Arab Republic and its army. It shows unquestionably that the United States and its allies are supporting ISIL and other armed terrorist groups. Without a doubt, it disproves the claims of the United States of America that it is fighting terrorism and working to restore security and peace in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Syrian Arab Republic calls on the Security Council to condemn this act of aggression and prevail on the United States of America to prevent its recurrence, respect the sovereignty of Syria and the integrity of its territory and people, and comply with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the counter-terrorism resolutions of the Security Council.

Syria stresses that counter-terrorism efforts are acceptable only if they take place in coordination with the Government and army of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Any actions beyond the scope of international law can only be considered a blatant attack on the sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that it will not waver in its open war on terrorism. It will persist in seeking a political solution to the crisis in Syria through dialogue among Syrians, without foreign intervention, in order to uphold the rights of the Syrian Arab people and the regional and international role of Syria.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mounzer **Mounzer**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

United Nations S/2016/791

Security Council

Distr.: General
19 September 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 16 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of New Zealand, the Security Council is scheduled to hold, on 22 September 2016, a briefing on the terrorist threat to civil aviation, in connection with the item entitled "Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts".

To help to steer the discussion on the subject, a concept note has been prepared (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gerard **van Bohemen**
Permanent Representative

16-16113 (E) 200916

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Annex to the letter dated 16 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council briefing on the terrorist threat to civil aviation, to be held on 22 September 2016

Summary

On 22 September, the President of the Security Council will convene a meeting, at the level of ministers for foreign affairs, on the terrorist threat to civil aviation. The intention is for the Council to adopt a resolution to address this evolving threat, emphasizing the need for States to take measures both collectively, through the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and individually, to promote the effective implementation of aviation security measures. The Secretary-General of ICAO will brief the Council.

Terrorist threat to civil aviation

Civil aviation remains an iconic target for terrorist groups. Several attacks in the past year alone show that the world is facing an urgent and growing threat. Terrorist groups are likely to continue to target civil aviation globally and attempt to exploit any security weaknesses at airports. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida have repeatedly stated their intention and demonstrated their capability to do so. This brings into sharp focus the importance of having effective security arrangements in place at airports to counter the threat.

Action to address the threat to civil aviation

The international community's response must evolve to keep pace with the changing nature of the threat. States need to have effective measures in place to detect and deter terrorist attacks against aviation and to ensure that these measures are implemented on a sustainable basis.

ICAO is the global body responsible for developing and monitoring international aviation security standards: its work should be supported and its member States are urged to work through it to ensure that international standards keep pace with the threat.

The provision of capacity-building and technical assistance is also needed to enable all States to implement aviation security measures effectively.

Given the vital importance of international civil aviation to economic development, trade and political and cultural links between States, the threat to civil aviation is by its nature a global issue. Attacks against civil aviation not only endanger the lives of those on board or on the ground but also undermine the confidence of people all over the world in the security of international civil aviation.

Action is needed by States not only at the national level but also at the regional and international levels, including through ICAO. A high-level meeting of the Security Council will send a strong message to the international community and help to galvanize activity to address the threat posed by terrorist targeting of civil aviation.

The Security Council has already focused on other evolving aspects of counter-terrorism activities, from the financing of terrorism to the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon, as well as links between terrorist groups and organized crime. In keeping with this approach, a Council resolution on terrorism and aviation security would raise awareness of the threat to civil aviation, help to reinforce the existing international framework of aviation security standards and encourage the implementation of effective measures to address the threat.

The proposed resolution (under negotiation) is intended to recognize the terrorist threat to global civil aviation as a threat to international peace and security and to call upon all States to implement effective measures to mitigate the threat and to urge them to work within ICAO to support the effective implementation of international standards. It also encourages adherence to international standards, international partnerships and collaboration, and good security practices. It is a counter-terrorism-focused resolution, in line with the standards set out in annex 17 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

To frame the discussion, the Secretary-General of ICAO, Fang Liu, will give a briefing. In their statements Security Council members may wish to address the following points:

(a) The evolving terrorist threat to civil aviation and the specific challenges that this presents;

(b) How to bolster international collaboration to address the challenges, in particular under the auspices of ICAO;

(c) How to improve and strengthen compliance with international aviation security standards;

(d) What States can do to increase their capacity to provide effective aviation security on the ground;

(e) Areas in which States may have special capacity to assist others to provide assistance to tackle the threat.